

Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1-9 (Canceled).

10. (New) A method of determining whether or not the binding of a molecule to a ligand is specific, which method comprises:

(i) treating a sample comprising the molecule with a solid phase carrier onto which is immobilized the ligand to obtain a once-treated liquid,

(ii) extracting the molecule bound to the ligand immobilized on the solid phase carrier in (i) to obtain a ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 1,

(iii) treating the once-treated liquid obtained in (i) with a solid phase carrier onto which is immobilized the ligand to obtain a twice-treated liquid,

(iv) extracting the molecule bound to the ligand immobilized on the solid phase carrier in (iii) to obtain a ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 2,

(v) comparing and/or analyzing the molecule contained in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 1 and the molecule contained in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 2, and

(vi) identifying a molecule, which is detected in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 1 and which is not detected in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 2 or which is detected in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 2 at a significantly lower level than in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 1, on the basis of (v), whereupon the molecule is determined to be specific for the ligand.

11. (New) The method of claim 10, which comprises repeating (iii) and (iv) twice or more.

12. (New) A method of determining whether or not the binding of a molecule to a ligand is specific, which method comprises:

(i) dividing a sample into first and second portions, and treating the first portion with a solid phase carrier onto which is immobilized an inert substance to obtain a first once-treated liquid,

(ii) treating the first once-treated liquid with a solid phase carrier onto which is immobilized a ligand to obtain a first twice-treated liquid,

(iii) extracting the molecule bound to the ligand immobilized on the solid phase carrier in (ii) to obtain a ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 1,

(iv) treating the second portion with a solid phase carrier onto which is immobilized the ligand to obtain a second first-treated liquid,

(v) treating the second first-treated liquid with a solid phase carrier onto which is immobilized the ligand to obtain a second twice-treated liquid,

(vi) extracting the molecule bound to the ligand immobilized on the solid phase carrier in (v) to obtain a ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 2,

(vii) comparing and/or analyzing the molecule contained in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 1 and the molecule contained in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 2, and

(viii) identifying a molecule, which is detected in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 1 and which is not detected in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 2, or which is detected in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 2 at a significantly lower level than in the ligand-immobilized solid phase carrier extract 1, on the basis of (vii), whereupon the molecule is determined to be specific for the ligand.

13. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the inert substance is stearic acid.

14. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the inert substance is structurally similar to the subject ligand, and does not possess the physiological activity possessed by the ligand.

15. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the sample is a biological sample.

16. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the sample is a biological sample.

17. (New) The method of claim 10, which further comprises calculating the binding constant of the molecule binding to the ligand.

18. (New) The method of claim 12, which further comprises calculating the binding constant of the molecule binding to the ligand.